

West Virginia has, in the past, benefited greatly from Federal programs designed to improve the quality of school buildings, and the money we've received has been put to excellent use. Funding made available by the Qualified Zone Academy Bond program, a program in which the Federal Government authorizes the states to sell school construction bonds and then pays the interest to the bond holders, has provided my state with over \$4 million in bond funding since 1998. This money has been used to renovate science labs, install wireless computer equipment, remove asbestos, and provide modular classrooms, among many other valuable projects. Another program, a direct funding initiative included in the FY 2001 final budget agreement, has also been a great success in West Virginia and across the nation.

Many schools in my State are unable to take advantage of school bondings because some local communities are so needy that they cannot afford even the low- or no-interest loans that program makes available. And when areas which are already disadvantaged are hit with natural disasters, such as the heart-breaking catastrophic flooding West Virginia has now suffered two years in a row, school districts cannot be expected to keep up with their infrastructure needs.

The direct funding initiative in the 2001 budget made \$1.2 billion in grants available for emergency school renovation and repair and technology improvements across America. West Virginia was fortunate to receive nearly \$8 million in funding from the program, enabling our schools to replace roofs, fix faulty wiring and sewage systems, remove asbestos, and make themselves better prepared for fire emergencies.

The success stories from these programs prove that we can make a real impact in the quality of schools in our nation. I am proud to introduce two bills today designed to build upon these past successes: the America's Better Classroom Act and the Building Our Children's Future Act.

The America's Better Classroom Act is designed to expand and build upon the success of the Qualified Zone Academy Bond, or the QZAB program. It expands this program by \$2.8 billion so even more school districts will be able to take advantage of the low-or no-interest school construction loans that it provides. QZAB's are aimed at schools in disadvantaged areas. To qualify, a school must be located in an empowerment zone, enterprise community, or 35 per cent of its students must be eligible for free or reduced lunch.

In addition to expanding the QZAB program, the America's Better Classroom Act creates a new \$22 billion bonding program designed to help all school districts meet their renovation needs. Funding to states will be allocated based on the Title I funding formula. In this way, many more school districts will have the opportunity to

reap the benefits of no- or low-interest loans for school renovation and repair. This legislation is similar to a House bill sponsored by Congresswoman NANCY JOHNSON and Congressman CHARLIE RANGEL. I look forward to working with the House colleagues on this crucial program.

The second bill I introduce today is the Building Our Children's Future Act, a \$5 billion initiative designed to help schools that, due to poverty, high growth, or unforeseen disaster, are unable to meet their repair and renovation needs. Many districts that are facing these difficult challenges find themselves so strapped that they cannot even afford to pay back the principle on an interest-free loan. These areas need direct help, and this grant program provides it.

The Building Our Children's Future Act gives each State funding based on Title I, with a priority to target funding to schools that have been damaged or destroyed by a natural disaster or are located in a high poverty or high growth areas, defined by the state. This makes certain that states have the flexibility to put the money where it is needed the most.

The bill also recognizes that not all renovation needs are the same. In the 21st century, providing students and teachers with access to technology will be a critical part of keeping schools up-to-date. Likewise, we have made a commitment to assist states in covering the costs of special education, a commitment that will undoubtedly require renovation and construction to accommodate special needs. For this reason, the Building Our Children's Future Act sets aside a portion of its funds for states to make technology improvements and carry out programs under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Finally, the Building Our Children's Future Act also makes money available to schools with high Native American populations and schools located in outlying areas, so that no group will be left behind as we seek to remedy our school infrastructure crisis.

I believe that America's Better Classroom Act and the Building Our Children's Future Act are important steps toward giving our children the learning environments they deserve. When our schools are in disrepair, we cannot expect our educational system to be any different. I hope you will join me in supporting these two bills and, in doing so, join me in supporting the futures of our children and our Nation.

STATEMENTS ON SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 293—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF NOVEMBER 10 THROUGH NOVEMBER 16, 2002, AS "NATIONAL VETERANS AWARENESS WEEK" TO EMPHASIZE THE NEED TO DEVELOP EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS REGARDING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF VETERANS TO THE COUNTRY

Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. THURMOND, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. CLELAND, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. MILLER, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LUGAR, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BREAUX, Mr. DODD, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. HELMS, Mr. BAUCUS, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. REID, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. GREGG, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. CARPER, Mr. INOUE, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mr. DAYTON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

S. RES. 293

Whereas tens of millions of Americans have served in the Armed Forces of the United States during the past century;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Americans have given their lives while serving in the Armed Forces during the past century;

Whereas the contributions and sacrifices of the men and women who served in the Armed Forces have been vital in maintaining our freedoms and way of life;

Whereas the advent of the all-volunteer Armed Forces has resulted in a sharp decline in the number of individuals and families who have had any personal connection with the Armed Forces;

Whereas this reduction in familiarity with the Armed Forces has resulted in a marked decrease in the awareness by young people of the nature and importance of the accomplishments of those who have served in our Armed Forces, despite the current educational efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans service organizations;

Whereas our system of civilian control of the Armed Forces makes it essential that the future leaders of the Nation understand the history of military action and the contributions and sacrifices of those who conduct such actions; and

Whereas on October 30, 2001, President George W. Bush issued a proclamation urging all Americans to observe November 11 through November 17, 2001, as National Veterans Awareness Week: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of November 10 through November 16, 2002, as "National Veterans Awareness Week" for the purpose of emphasizing educational efforts directed at elementary and secondary school students concerning the contributions and sacrifices of veterans; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe National Veterans

Awareness Week with appropriate educational activities.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, today I have the honor of joining with 50 of my colleagues in submitting a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the week that includes Veterans' Day this year be designated as "National Veterans Awareness Week." This marks the third year in a row that I have introduced such a resolution, which has been adopted unanimously by the Senate on both previous occasions.

The purpose of National Veterans Awareness Week is to serve as a focus for educational programs designed to make students in elementary and secondary schools aware of the contributions of veterans and their importance in preserving American peace and prosperity. This goal takes on particular importance and immediacy this year as we find ourselves at war in the wake of the attack against us on our own territory.

Why do we need such an educational effort? In a sense, this action has become necessary because we are victims of our own success with regard to the superior performance of our armed forces. The plain fact is that there are just fewer people around now who have had any connection with military service. For example, as a result of tremendous advances in military technology and the resultant productivity increases, our current armed forces now operate effectively with a personnel roster that is one-third less in size than just 10 years ago. In addition, the success of the all-volunteer career-oriented force has led to much lower turnover of personnel in today's military than in previous eras when conscription was in place. Finally, the number of veterans who served during previous conflicts, such as World War II, when our military was many times larger than today, is inevitably declining.

The net result of these changes is that the percentage of the entire population that has served in the Armed Forces is dropping rapidly, a change that can be seen in all segments of society. Whereas during World War II it was extremely uncommon to find a family in America that did not have one of its members on active duty, now there are numerous families that include no military veterans at all. As a consequence of this lack of opportunity for contacts with veterans, many of our young people have little or no connection with or knowledge about the important historical and ongoing role of men and women who have served in the military. This omission seems to have persisted despite ongoing educational efforts by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans service organizations.

This lack of understanding about military veterans' important role in our society can have potentially serious repercussions. In our country, civilian control of the armed forces is the key tenet of military governance.

A citizenry that is oblivious to the capabilities and limitations of the armed forces, and to its critical role throughout our history can make decisions that have unexpected and unwanted consequences. Even more important, general recognition of the importance of those individual character traits that are essential for military success, such as patriotism, selflessness, sacrifice and heroism, is vital to maintaining these key aspects of citizenship in the armed forces and even throughout the population at large.

Among today's young people, a generation that has grown up largely during times of peace and extraordinary prosperity and has embraced a "me first" attitude, it is perhaps even more important to make sure that there is solid understanding of what it has taken to attain this level of comfort and freedom. Even in the midst of our ongoing war against terrorism, with Americans in uniform finding themselves in harm's way around the world, many young people seem to be totally divorced from the implications of the conflict that is raging.

The failure of our children to understand why a military is important, why our society continues to depend on it for ultimate survival, and why a successful military requires integrity and sacrifice, will have predictable consequences as these youngsters become of voting age. Even though military service is a responsibility that is no longer shared by a large segment of the population, as it has been in the past, knowledge of the contributions of those who have served in the Armed Forces is as important as it has ever been. To the extent that many of us will not have the opportunity to serve our country in uniform, we must still remain cognizant of our responsibility as citizens to fulfill the obligations, we owe, both tangible and intangible, to those who do serve and who do sacrifice on our behalf.

The importance of this issue was brought home to me two years ago by Samuel I. Cashdollar, who was then a 13-year-old seventh grader at Lewes Middle School in Lewes, DE. Samuel won the Delaware VFW's Youth Essay Contest that year with a powerful presentation titled "How Should We Honor America's Veterans?" Samuel's essay pointed out that we have Nurses' Week, Secretaries' Week, and Teachers' Week, to rightly emphasize the importance of these occupations, but the contributions of those in uniform tend to be overlooked. We don't want our children growing up to think that Veterans Day has simply become a synonym for department store sale, and we don't want to become a Nation where more high school seniors recognize the name Britney Spears than the name Dwight Eisenhower.

National Veterans Awareness Week complements Veterans Day by focusing on education as well as commemoration, on the contributions of the many in addition to the heroism and service

of the individual. National Veterans Awareness Week also presents an opportunity to remind ourselves of the contributions and sacrifices of those who have served in peacetime as well as in conflict; both groups work unending hours and spend long periods away from their families under conditions of great discomfort so that we all can live in a land of freedom and plenty.

Last year, my resolution designating National Veterans Awareness Week had 58 cosponsors and was approved in the Senate by unanimous consent. Responding to that resolution, President Bush issued a proclamation urging our citizenry to observe National Veterans Awareness Week. I ask my colleagues to continue this trend of support for our veterans by endorsing this resolution again this year. Our children and our children's children will need to be well informed about what veterans have accomplished in order to make appropriate decisions as they confront the numerous worldwide challenges that they are sure to face in the future.

SENATE RESOLUTION 294—TO AMEND RULE XLII OF THE STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE TO PROHIBIT EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION IN THE SENATE BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DASCHLE, Mr. DODD, Mr. TORRICELLI, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. DAYTON, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. INOUE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. REED, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. HARKIN, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. REID, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CORZINE, Mr. BINGAMAN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. BAYH, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. WELLSTONE, Mr. KERRY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. EDWARDS, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CHAFFEE, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. CARNAHAN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mr. CLELAND) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 294

Resolved,

SECTION 1. AMENDMENT TO THE STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE.

Paragraph 1 of rule XLII of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended by striking "or state of physical handicap" and inserting "state of physical handicap, or sexual orientation".

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to submit a resolution to prohibit employment discrimination in the United States Senate based on sexual orientation.

The resolution would amend the Standing Rules of the Senate by adding "sexual orientation" to "race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or state of physical handicap" in the anti-discrimination provision of rule 42, which governs the Senate's employment practices.